4/20/70

Dear Dick,

As you know, for I reacted immediately and strongly, I think it was a great blunder on your part to put Howard in contact with Lifton for any reason. It was even more seriously bad judgement when you knew that Lifton was busily engaged in a rather large and often-successful espionage campaign against me, aside from his endless defamations where he dared them, and that I trusted Howard with anything he wanted to see.

This business with Nichols is just too much, I'm damned if I'm going to have to worry about everyone I try to help blabbing what I let him have. I find it simply incredible, frankly, after what he saw and overheard here that Howard would even see John, for he heard enough of a conversation last time he was here. All the egos who can accomplish nothing are set on stealing reputations they so long for and I am worried to beat hell about the damage to out getting what can be gotten and the endless misuse, which mean more and are worse than theft per se.

Whether you or he find me unreasonable or not, neither my time nor my nerves can tolerate this kind of business. If Howard has ANY intercourse at all with any of those who have made themselves my enemies, and this is neither accidental nor unwarranted language, then I will have nothing further to do with him. Period. It is that simple. In Lifton's case, as I told you, he was also in possession of information exchanged between Gary and me that Gary and I can attribute to nothing but mail interception, for neither of us, in this particular case, gave copies to anyone else or discussed it with anyone else. In John's case you know what he has already done, copyrighting our work as his own being the least dishonest of it.

If you do not understand this or if you cannot agree with it, I hope you can understand this is deadly for my health and has taken more time than the writing of several books would have. I welcome neither sacrifice and I regard the return as hardly worth the cost. If I have to be selfish, or seem to be, that will be it. It is tragic that in every case thus far I have been right, and each time I look back with regrets. I am now at a point where the progress I have made and the position I am in will brook no such needless risks, for nothing but effluvia can be the return to those who cause the jeopardy.

I am preparing to become a hermit. We will survive no other way. If you wonder if this is reasonable, then I ask you to tell me what single advance to either public understanding or our essential knowledge either John of Lifton has made? Unless you can show something of meaning, is it not obvious that, aside from all the other considerations, time spent with them is entirely wasted and all of us can out it to better use?...In Howard's personal interest, this, inevitably, is going to wind up causing a deep trauma and currently results in spreading him so thin it is against his immediate, selfish interest. But now I am thinking of but two things: what I regard as the minimum requirement of our success and that of my health and my work, both of which have been damaged but this endless taking of time so much of which has to be spent drustrating evil that only too often I alone detect, the latest case of this being Skolnick, where you alone understood it but can do nothing. This is my time that was wasted, my nerves further jangled. Without exactly what Howard is getting into and may have done already without realizing it, without my initial trust of John, which is entirely my own fault, the John situation would not exist as the Skolnick one in that case wouldn't. For this I got one think that is now worthless, Skolnick having ruined that along with what I didn't get from this well-meaning friend.

Hastily,